



DISCUSSION ITEMS

Agenda Item # 7

AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

Meeting Date: May 14, 2019

Subject: Request from the Friends of the Los Altos Library to Utilize Land on the Civic Center Campus

Prepared by: Chris Jordan, City Manager

Attachment(s):

1. Memorandum from the Friends of the Los Altos Library
2. Site A map
3. Site B map

Initiated by:
City Manager

Previous Council Consideration:

Fiscal Impact:
Not Applicable

Environmental Review:
Not Applicable

Policy Question(s) for Council Consideration:

Does the City Council wish to provide a free lease of land on the civic center campus to the Friends of the Library? If so, how much land and at what location? And, for how long should the lease be in effect?

Summary:

- The Friends of the Library have been utilizing space at the Hillview Community Center for over 40 years at no cost to the Friends
- With the upcoming demolition of the Community Center, the Friends have sent a memorandum to the City Council requesting Council approval to utilize land on the civic center campus
- The Friends wants to utilize the City's property until the redevelopment of the current library

Staff Recommendation:

Approve a motion directing staff to enter into a lease agreement with Friends of the Library allowing that organization to utilize approximately 500 sq. ft. of land between the Police Station and the History Museum at no cost until the new Community Center is constructed

Reviewed By:

City Manager

CJ

City Attorney

CD

Finance Director

SE



Subject: Request from the Friends of the Los Altos Library to Utilize Land on the Civic Center Campus

Purpose

The Council is asked to consider the request of the Friends of the Los Altos Library (FoL) to utilize land at the civic center campus.

Background

The FoL is a non-profit that provides funds to the Los Altos Library. As explained in the attached memorandum (Attachment 1) from the FoL, the Friends provides approximately \$165,000 annually to the Library. The FoL operation is centered around space provided by the City at Hillview Community Center to the FoL at no cost. Currently, the City is providing approximately 1,200 square feet.

With the anticipated demolition of the Hillview Community Center in the next few months, the City informed the FoL almost two years ago that it would need to vacate the premises by this summer. The FoL has yet to find temporary or permanent accommodations and is now requesting space on the civic center campus.

Discussion/Analysis

Staff has reviewed the various suggestions by the FoL.

All Locations on the Civic Center Campus

Since the beginning of the planning for the new community center in 2017, staff has urged the FoL to find a location that is not on the civic center campus. Staff is always concerned about placing temporary structures on this campus because more uses can exacerbate an already challenging parking situation, and we are concerned about the aesthetics of placing such temporary buildings on this site. Staff has been willing to discuss possible smaller, temporary buildings during the period of construction of the new community center because the civic center campus will be hosting a large construction project and the entire site will be less attractive during this period. However, any temporary structures cannot interfere with the orderly operations of the City, nor can they block or restrict access to facilities or to underground utilities.

Area between the Police Station and History Museum

There are several, small apricot trees in this location that should be avoided. The City also needs to maintain access to the cell tower as occasionally the tower requires maintenance involving the use of a large truck that is placed on this site. This site also includes underground utilities as shown on Attachment 2. We also anticipate that this will be the only access to the baseball field so space needs to be set aside for pedestrians. To accommodate all of these competing challenges, staff has outlined two locations where storage sheds for the FoL could be placed - one 200 sq. ft. location and one that is approximately 289 sq. ft.



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Area near the Library parking lot and Soccer Field

This space is approximately 600 sq. ft. The placement of any temporary facility in this location will need to be set back from the parking lot and away from the Oak trees in that location. Staff's main concern with this location is aesthetics - a temporary building here can be viewed from both the library and Hillview Avenue.

Term of Occupancy

The FoL are requesting to place temporary facilities on the civic center campus "until the existing library can be redeveloped." As mentioned above, staff recognizes that the civic center campus will look like a construction site until the new community center is constructed. Under the circumstances, staff does not object to 2 or 3 small temporary sheds on the campus. However, with the opening of the new community center, staff believes that the civic center campus should be viewed as a welcoming site to our citizens and one that they can take pride in. Continuing to have small temporary facilities on the campus could diminish that belief in the community. Therefore, if the Council is agreeable to allowing the FoL to utilize some portion of the civic center campus per the FoL request, staff would recommend that the term be limited to the period while the community center is under construction.

Options

- 1) Direct staff to enter into a no cost lease agreement with the FoL under the terms requested by the FoL – including two storage sheds and mobile work space on the civic center campus until the redevelopment of the existing library.

Advantages: This would allow the FoL to maintain operations in a manner that most closely resembles the FoL's current business model.

Disadvantages: The civic center campus would be the site of one or more temporary buildings totaling at least 1,000 sq. ft. for probably five years at a minimum.

- 2) Direct staff to enter into a no cost lease agreement with the FoL for the space that staff has outlined (totaling just under 500 sq. ft.) near the police station for the duration that the community center is under construction.

Advantages: This allows the FoL space to store books and materials near the library in keeping with the FoL's current business model for approximately 18 months.



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Disadvantages: This does not allow adequate space for the FoL to catalogue and materials and to administer operations as the FoL currently does at the Hillview Community Center.

3) Deny the FoL's request for temporary space on the civic center campus.

Advantages: There will be no temporary buildings on the civic center campus housing FoL materials or offices.

Disadvantages: This would likely disrupt the FoL's operations and result in a decrease in FoL contributions to the Library.

4) Provide other direction to staff regarding locating FoL facilities on the civic center campus.

Recommendation

The staff recommends Option 2.

Agenda Request to Los Altos City Council : Friends of the Library of Los Altos and Community, Inc. Space Needs

April 19, 2019

To: Mayor Lynette Lee Eng
Vice Mayor Jan Pepper
Councilmember Jeannie Bruins
Councilmember Anita Enander
Councilmember Neysa Fligor

Cc: Chris Jordan, City Manager
Jon Maginot, Deputy City Manager and City Clerk

From: Friends of the Library of Los Altos and Community, Inc.

Purpose and Request

Friends of the Library of Los Altos and Community, Inc. (FoL) is a long standing institution in the Los Altos community, having been formed more than 60 years ago to support the Los Altos Library (the Library). To continue effective operations, FoL requests that the Los Altos City Council (the Council) allow us to locate two storage sheds and a mobile work space on the Civic Center campus, to substitute for the Hillview Community Center classroom and storage space which the City has supplied to FoL for the last 44 years.

City staff informs us that storage sheds with aggregate area less than 500 square feet require only City Council approval; the mobile work space requires initial Council approval, review by the Planning Department, Design approval, and final Council approval.

Accordingly, FoL submits the following two items and requests that they be included in the agenda of the Council meeting to be held on May 14, 2019:

- 1. Approval of two storage sheds to be placed between the Police Station and the History House on locations that have been determined suitable by City Staff.**
- 2. Initial approval of a mobile work space to be located on Civic Center grounds.**

For further details, including a description of FoL and what FoL provides to the Library (including approximately \$165,000 annually to fund reading, education, programs, safe spaces, information access, among other things) and the community at large, see below.

Friends of the Los Altos Library

Submission

This submission to the Council summarizes our requests, the contribution of FoL to our community, and the assistance that we have received from the City in the past.

- Hillview Community Center is scheduled to be demolished this summer -- there is no allocation for space for FoL in the new community center.
- We would like to continue operations in temporary space until the existing Library can be redeveloped.
- At this time, we have an offer from City staff of approximately 489 square feet of space, subject to Council approval, for two storage sheds located between the Police Station and History Museum.
- We have also requested approval to install a mobile work space of approximately 800 -1,000 square feet adjacent to the sheds, similar to the units next to the Police building, to house book donation processing.
 - We understand that the City is considering an alternative location for a mobile work facility of 15 feet by 40 feet on a parcel of land across from the Library entrance. Although smaller than we desire, we are open to discussing this option further with the City.
- We have offered to pay for all three of the structures.

About Friends of the Los Altos Library

FoL is a long standing institution in the Los Altos community, having been formed more than 60 years ago to support the Los Altos Library.

- We believe that doing all we can to support and improve our Library for the benefit of everyone in our community is worthwhile - for reading, education, programs, safe spaces, information access - and that the City is a better place for all of us as a consequence.
- We have over 150 regular volunteers who work nearly 20,000 volunteer hours annually, and more than 600 contributing members.
- As all cities in Santa Clara County do for their libraries, our City has provided FoL space at no cost to support our efforts for the past 44 years.

Thousands of residents enjoy our quarterly Book Sales, the daily Ongoing Sale in the Library and the Cafe in the Library, all sponsored by FoL. By sorting, pricing and selling donated books we are able to donate approximately \$165,000 to the Library each year to pay for: a dedicated collection of best seller and new books for our Library users; almost all children's and teen's programs; adult lectures; additional furniture; events and prizes for the summer reading program; and the Senior Book Club. Our contributions enable more educational and enrichment opportunities than would be possible from County funds. Also, residents greatly appreciate having a convenient way to recycle their used books for a good cause.

FoL online

<https://losaltoslibraryfriends.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/friends.of.los.altos.library/>

Background

Our operations and space requirements are completely dominated by the logistics of moving books and storing them for sale. Several times each week books are cleared from the donation room in the Library. The typical weekly volume is 150-180 bankers boxes (5,000 or more books). After sorting and pricing, books go five different ways - to ongoing sales in the Library, to online sales, to storage for quarterly sales, to donations, and to recycling. We have a small number of skilled volunteers who physically move this volume of books between the Library and Hillview several times a week, without whom the operation would not happen. Our operation currently requires 1,200 square feet of classroom and storage space.

Since 1975, the City has provided space at no cost for FoL to operate, just as all other cities in the County do for their Friends of the Library organizations. This arrangement, along with the efforts of our volunteers, enables us to contribute the vast majority of our annual revenues directly to the Library.

Since we learned that Hillview was closing, FoL researched alternatives to the Hillview location that we are losing. We determined that the best way to continue contributing at the same funding level and provide a meaningful and enjoyable experience for our hundreds of local volunteers each year is to continue to operate from the Civic Center campus. The donation room is in the Library, convenient to all and open seven days and evenings a week. And, due to the extraordinary volume of donations, we wish to continue to move books in the most efficient and expeditious way possible, which necessitates working space in or near the Library.

Over the last two years we have worked with City staff to review potential space. We have an offer from the City staff of approximately 489 square feet of space for two storage sheds located between the Police Station and the History Museum, subject to Council approval. We need these sheds to be in place immediately to store the donations that will continue to arrive in the Library. Thus, we request that Council, at its May 14, 2019 meeting, approve installation of these sheds.

Furthermore, we need replacement work space to sort, price and prepare books for our sales. City staff has informed us there is not available building space for our needs, so FoL has proposed a mobile classroom-type unit with the needed 800-1,000 square feet.

Our preference is to locate the mobile work facility in the same area as the two sheds, between the Police Station and the History Museum. This will minimize book movement from the Library and enable easy access to LAYC where our quarterly book sales will be held after Hillview closes. As we described above, we would pay for all of the structures, as well as some of the site development work, such as replacing three apricot trees if necessary for siting the mobile work facility in this location (tree removal is not necessary for siting the two sheds).

We understand that City staff has identified a possible alternative location for a smaller mobile work facility across from the Library entrance near the parking lot. We are told that this location would provide no more than 600 square feet, although we do not yet know the details of this alternative (exact placement, site preparation requirements, etc.). Although smaller than we desire, we are open to discussing this option further with the City.

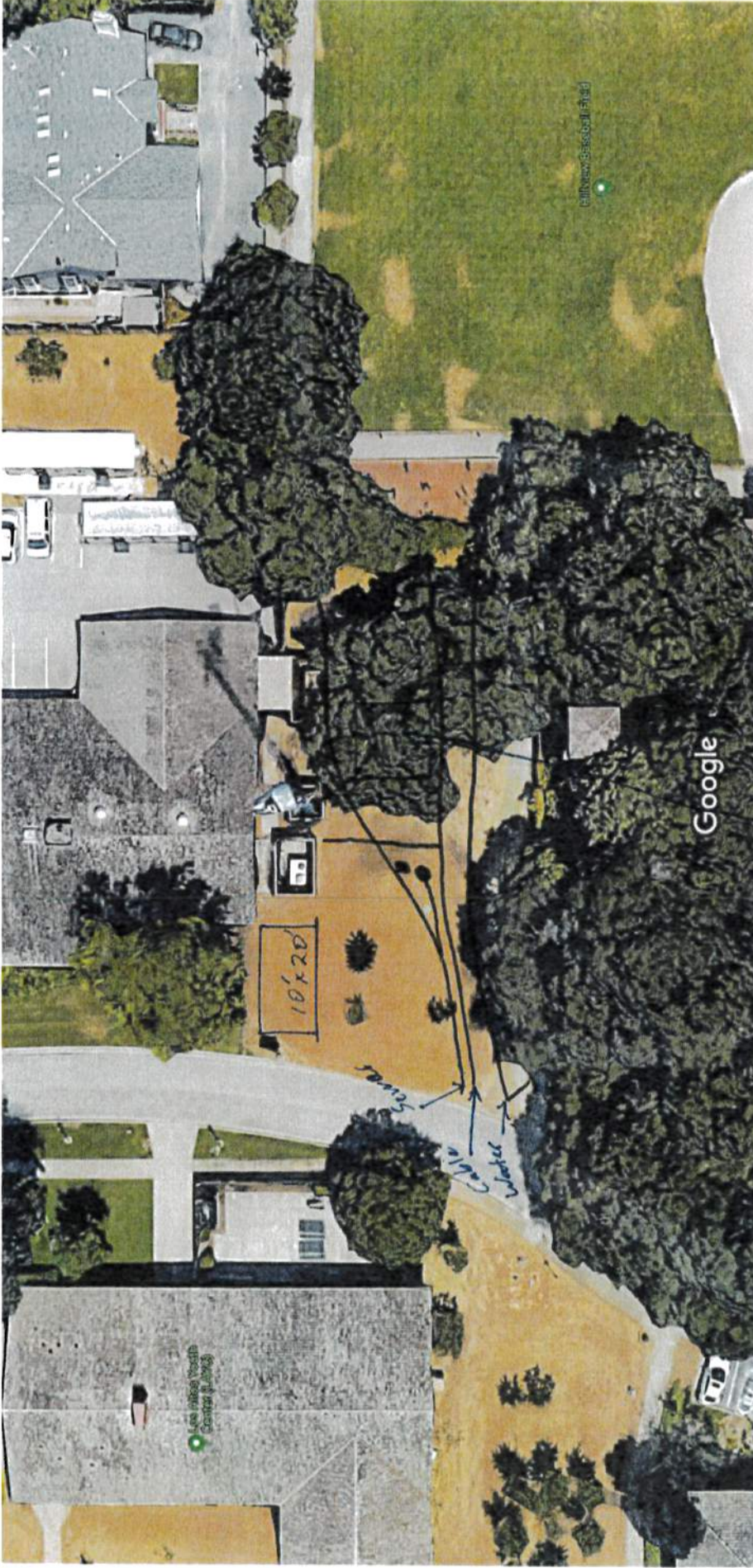
Friends of the Los Altos Library

FoL has also been working with the Library and the Library District to find possible short term temporary work space during the transition. A very small space in the Library (about 20% of our current space) has been identified as a possible work space for our use (expected to be less than four months). Use of this space will not be sufficient for us to carry out our full operations but will allow us to continue a minimum level of sales and revenue generation. Note, however, FoL use of this space will decrease available space for patrons in our already overcrowded Library and will cause loss of a beloved reading area.

Our partnership with the City allows us to provide public services to both the Los Altos and Los Altos Hills communities in the form of direct support for our Library. We believe being on the Civic Center campus aids in our efforts to accomplish this goal. We are confident that with your help we will be able to serve our neighbors for many years to come.

For additional information please contact Mary Jo Kelly, President, FoL at maryjokelly2007@gmail.com or Margaret Brooks, Vice President of FoL at mmbrooks6947@gmail.com.

Google Maps



Imagery ©2019 Google, Map data ©2019 Google 20 ft

17' x 17'

